

Message Text

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SUBJ: NORWAY'S FAR LEFT COALITION PARTY SV ELECTS NEW LEADERS
AND FINALIZES BREAK WITH COMMUNISTS

REFS: (A) OSLO 5017, (B) OSLO A-205,(C) 74 OSLO 5456

USMMARY: NORWAY'S SOCIALIST LEFT PARTY HELD ITS ANNUAL
CONGRESS RECENTLY AND NAMED NEW LEADERS- BERGE FURRE
AS CHAIRMAN ANC COMMUNIST REIDAR LARSEN AS PARLIAMENTARY
LEADER. THE CONGRESS ALSO VOTED TO COMPLETE THE
PARTY'S BREAK WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY (NKP). THE
LEADERSHIP CHANGE AND THE BREAK WITH NKP SEEM UNLIKELY
TO HELP SV REVERSE ITS DECLINE IN POPULAR SUPPORT.
THEY MAY EVEN CONTRIBUTE TO FURTHER LOSSES. END
SUMMARY.

1. NORWAY'S FAR LEFT SOCIALIST LEFT PARTY (SV) HELD
ITS ANNUAL CONGRESS FEB 21-22. IT VOTED TO COMPLETE
SV'S UNIFICATION AND FINALIZED SV'S BREAK WITH NORWAY'S
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COMMUNIST PARTY (NKP). SV MEMBERS MUST TERMINATE THEIR
MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER PARTIES BY MAY 1.

2. THE PARTY'S STORTING LEADER BERGE FURRE WAS ELECTED TO REPLACE BERIT AS SV CHAIRMAN. SV'S PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND THE ENTIRE CONGRESS ELECTED FORMER NKP CHAIRMAN REIDER LARSEN TO REPLACE FURRE AS SV PARLIAMENTARY LEADER. AS AND STEINAR STJERNO WERE ELECTED VICE CHAIRMEN. SV SECRETARY RUNE FREDH AND PARTY NEWSPAPER (NY TID) EDITOR AUGDUNN OLTEDAL WERE REELECTED. ALL FOUR FORMER COMPONENT GROUPS IN SV ARE THUS REPRESENTED: LARSEN AND FREDH ARE BREAKING AWAY FROM NKP; FURRE AND STJERNO ARE FROM THE SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY (SF); AA IS FROM THE WORKERS' INFORMATION COMMITTEE (AIK) AND OLTEDAL A FORMER "INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST."

3. FURRE WAS ELECTED CHAIRMAN UNOPPOSED. AS WITHDREW HER CANDIDACY FOR REELECTION AS CHAIRMAN ONCE SHE FELT A BALANCED TICKET OF THE FORMER CONSTITUENT PARTIES WAS ASSURED. LARSEN DEFEATED FORMER SV PARLIAMENTARY LEADER FINN GUSTAVSEN (SF) IN A BITTER CONTEST, FURRE SUPPORTED AND VOTED FOR GUSTAVSEN AT FIRST BUT THEN SHIFTED TO LARSEN TO PRESERVE UNITY WITHIN THE PARTY. GUSTAVSEN AND OTHERS IN THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP REPORTEDLY HOPED TO POSTPONE THE CHOICE OF PARLIAMENTARY LEADER UNTIL LATER, THUS LEAVING THE CHOICE EXCLUSIVELY TO THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP. BUT AS AND OTHERS IN THE OTHER THREE GROUPS INSISTED ON FORCING THE ISSUE DURING THE CONGRESS TO PREVENT SF FROM DOMINATING SV'S LEADERSHIP. GUSTAVSEN WALKED OUT OF THE CONGRESS AFTER BEING HOOTED DOWN DURING THE DEBATE. ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT FIGURE MISSING FROM THE NEW LEADERSHIP IS ROALD HALVORSEN, WHOSE POSITION AS "DAILY MANAGER" WAS ABOLISHED. "INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST" HALVORSEN IS A TOUGH, ABLE FORMER COMMUNIST ORGANIZER AND IDEOLOGUE WHO ONCE HEADED THE GRAPHICAL WORKERS' UNION.

4. ADDITIONALLY, THE CONGRESS LEFT UNANSWERED SOME INTERNALLY CONTROVERSIAL QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE PARTY CONSIDERATION: (1) IS THE SV A LENINIST PARTY? (2) WHAT IS THE PARTY'S POSITION TOWARD THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE SO-CALLED SOCIALIST STATES OF THE EAST BLOC? AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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(3) CAN PARTY MEMBERS BE EXPELLED AND ON WHAT GROUNDS?

5. COMMENTS: THE CONGRESS DID NOT STRENGTHEN SV AND IT IS CLEAR THAT IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES EXIST AMONG THE REMAINING CONSTITUENT FACTIONS OF THE PARTY. THE REPLACEMENT OF GUSTAVSEN WITH LARSEN WAS IN LARGE PART A MOVE BY NON-SF MEMBERS OF THE PARTY TO REDUCE THE ROLE OF THE ONCE DOMINANT SF FACTION. THE ECLIPSE OF GUSTAVSEN AND HALVORSEN AND ASCENT OF FURRE AND LARSEN SHOULD WEAKEN SV'S APPEAL TO INDUSTRIAL WORKERS.

GUSTAVSEN IS SV'S MOST CHARISMATIC, IF CONTROVERSIAL
FIGURE, A CLEVER
AND EFFECTIVE PARLIAMENTARIAN, SHARP
DEBATER AND TACTICIAN. HE AND HALVORSEN HAVE CONSID-
ERABLE APPEAL IN SOME TRADE UNION CIRCLES. FURRE HAS
LITTLE APPEAL TO WORKERS, BUT IS A CLEVER STRATEGIST
WHO HAS WORKED HARD AND WELL TO APPEAL TO FARMERS AND
SHOULD APPEAL TO MANY INTELLECTUALS. HE IS UNDOUBTEDLY
SHREWDER AND ABLER THAN AS AND SHOULD AVOID HER GAFFES.
COMMUNIST LARSEN LED SV'S CHRISTMAS 1974 ATTEMPT TO
OVERTURN THE LABOR GOVERNMENT BY JOINING NON-SOCIALISTS
IN OPPOSING GOVERNMENT TERMS FOR PURCHASE OF ALCAN'S
MAJORITY INTEREST IN A NORWEGIAN ALUMINUM CONCERN
(REF C), AGAINST PARLIAMENTARY LEADER GUSTAVSEN'S BETTER
JUDGEMENT AND OPEN OPPOSITION. SV'S STAND IN THIS CASE
PERMANENTLY ALIENATED MANY WORKERS, ESPECIALLY IN THE
ALUMINUM INDUSTRY, WHO STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE ALCAN
STOCK PURCHASE AND RESENTED SV'S CLASS DISLOYALTY IN
TRYING TO THROW LABOR OUT OF POWER.

6. LARSEN WILL ALSO WEAKEN SV'S APPEAL TO VOTERS WARY
OF COMMUNISM AND ALSO, PARADOXICALLY, TO MANY COMMUNISTS
WHO REMAIN WITH NKP AND CONSIDER LARSEN A TRAITOR FOR
SPLITTING IT. WITH LARSEN AS PARLIAMENTARY LEADER,
PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION BETWEEN SV AND LABOR WILL
PRESUMABLY BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. LARSEN'S
INTRACTABILITY WILL MAKE IT MORE LIKELY THAT LABOR
WILL NEED PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT FROM THE TWO MAJOR
MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD PARTIES (CENTER AND CHRISTIAN
PEOPLE'S). DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE SV LEADERSHIP
CHANGES MAY MAKE THE PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION MORE
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COMPLICATED, LABOR CIRCLES SEEM GENERALLY PLEASED
AT THE CONGRESS OUTCOME, BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THAT
SV'S POPULAR SUPPORT MAY DECLINE EVEN FURTHER,
ESPECIALLY AMONG WORKERS.
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